

Sunday29-A6 homily by Fr. Gabor

When you get married you make a vow. Through the marriage vow you promise to give everything you have, and most of all yourself, and you promise to give all this not only for good times, but also for difficult times.

Last Sunday we heard through the Gospel reading that Christian life is a lifelong preparation to a completely fulfilling union with Christ, which is like a marriage, and it will be as joyful as a wedding banquet.

He has already put everything into this eternal Communion, on the cross, and now it is our turn to put everything into it.

At the end of today's Gospel reading Jesus says: '...give back to Ceasar what belongs to Ceasar and to God what belongs to God.' Here Jesus refers to the tax that the Jewish people had to give to Ceasar.

So I would like to focus on what belongs to God and what we should give Him. First of all we should remember that God doesn't need anything from us for His own happiness, but rather it is us who need Him for our happiness. He doesn't need your money, like Ceasar. God will not benefit from it, but only you. God doesn't even depend on our praise and worship, but He is most happy indeed when we return His goodness by praising and worshipping Him. Praise and worship of God doesn't necessarily equal with going to church and sitting through a Mass and responding to prayers in a subdued, quiet way. Recently I was getting worried that sometimes during the Monday evening Mass I couldn't hear the responses, so I felt I was talking to myself. Real praise and worship of God means that you put your heart and mind fully into your prayers and actions at Mass, and so you offer your whole self to Him. As St. Pauls says in his letter to the Romans (12:1): 'I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.'

So what belongs to God is you, your whole self, just like in a marriage, couples belong to each other, and therefore they are called to give each other their entire selves, body and soul, but in reality they can only do that by first giving themselves completely to God, because it by living in Him completely that you become completely one as a couple. Outside God every God relationship is just an imitation of self-giving, but it doesn't deepen your unity.

From time to time we all lose our enthusiasm for giving ourselves to God and to others, therefore you need to renew your commitment to God and to your loved ones regularly. Couples are supposed to renew their marriage vow every year in front of the altar. There is power in a renewal of commitment. There is opportunity for it at every Mass. We renew our commitment to God at every Easter, and at every confession, but I strongly suggest that you renew your commitment to God by way of dedicating time to prayer and Bible study at home as well. I did the same recently. I now spend more time with Jesus in adoration every day and in fact I now ask Him every day to join me in praying

Office of Prayers which every clergy recites 5 times a day, and as we come to the bible passage I speak to Jesus and patiently wait for his responses in my soul, and believe it or not Jesus speaks to me in very simple terms. In fact I tell you my little secret: every time before I start prayer I give a big hug to the tabernacle, of course when nobody can see me. I can tell you truly that I feel much closer to Jesus, especially since we talk to each other every day, and this is all just because I consecrated or gave more time to be with Him and listen to Him.

I believe this is what belongs to God. So don't let Mass be just something that we do in the church building. Take home and even to your workplace some of the things that you do here, like the reading of the Bible and listening to it. Dedicate a sacred corner in your home. Give time to God together as a family. Listen to praise songs, and sing your favourite praise songs at home. Do everything in order to give glory to God, because all glory and honour belong to Him (1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Peter 1: 3-12).